

SENATE BILL 2621
By McNally

AN ACT to designate State Route 72 as the "278th RCT
Memorial Highway".

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to be the home of so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty; and

WHEREAS, many fine and honorable traditions have arisen from the deep wellspring of honor and bravery possessed by Tennesseans, but there is no finer tradition than that which gave Tennessee its nickname; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of the "Volunteer State" have, throughout the years, willingly forsaken the comforts and securities of inaction by taking up arms against the enemies of this great Nation, risking their lives and leaving their loved ones behind to honorably safeguard the freedoms and liberties guaranteed to all citizens of these United States and vanquishing those who threaten our way of life; and

WHEREAS, established in 1887 by an act of the 45th General Assembly, the Tennessee National Guard is a dedicated collection of the finest men and women this State has to offer. Always vigilant and prepared for duty, the Tennessee National Guard has proven time and again its ability to protect fellow Tennesseans and Americans and those around the world in need of aid; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Tennessee National Guard selflessly serve with courage and gallantry and deserve to be recognized for heroism in the line of duty and model citizenship in our American society; and

WHEREAS, the soldiers of the 278th Regimental Combat Team (RCT), Tennessee National Guard, are especially deserving of our deepest admiration and thanks, both for their valiant service in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the unit's past service in the Korean War; and

WHEREAS, formed from the 117th Regiment on July 31, 1946, the 278th Regimental Combat Team soon became the premier National Guard unit from East Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, initially mobilized from September 1950 through September 1954, the 278th RCT was instrumental in this nation's successful campaign against Communism during the Korean War; and

WHEREAS, mobilized once again in June 2004, the 278th RCT underwent training in Mississippi before being mobilized for active duty in Iraq; and

WHEREAS, throughout their exemplary term of service in Iraq, the men and women of the 278th RCT proudly carried forward and enhanced this State's reputation for bravery and volunteerism as they battled the evil forces of terrorism and supported the establishment of democratic principles of government; and

WHEREAS, the members of the 278th RCT have proudly upheld the ideal of the citizen soldier, an essential tradition of American society, and their courageous service stands as an enduring example of all the characteristics that have ensured the continued freedom of our nation and the preservation of its ideals over the course of our history; and

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly have seen fit to name certain highways to honor the memory of those courageous members of the United States Armed Forces who gave their lives in the defense of our nation; and

WHEREAS, no one is more deserving of this honor than the men and women of the 278th Regimental Combat Team who made the ultimate sacrifice, both in Iraq and in Korea,

while fighting to preserve the liberties we enjoy today and that our progeny will hopefully continue to cherish for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, these dear departed soldiers served with great courage and gallantry, giving their lives for their country and for the causes in which they believed, and for that ultimate sacrifice, they deserve proper commemoration; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, State Route 72 in its entirety (Blount, Loudon and Monroe counties) is hereby designated the "278th RCT Memorial Highway" as a lasting tribute to the brave members of the 278th Regimental Combat Team who made the ultimate sacrifice of their lives during the unit's recent deployment in Iraq and during the unit's stalwart service in the Korean War.

SECTION 2. The Department of Transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating State Route 72 in its entirety as the "278th RCT Memorial Highway". The cost of such signage shall be funded in accordance with Tennessee Code Annotated, § 54-1-133.

SECTION 3. The erection of such signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

SECTION 4. This act shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the commissioner of transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 5. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.